



Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health

Talking Points NOIRA Round 1

We welcome the opportunity to further review Virginia's discriminatory restrictions on abortion providers. There is not – and never has been – a medically-justifiable reason for imposing hospital-style regulations on the Commonwealth's safe, outpatient women's health centers.

Health center restrictions were designed to close abortion providers – not protect patient health.

- We all support women's health and safety, but health center restrictions aren't about that.
- Singling out women's health centers for hospital-style regulations is part of a long-term, coordinated campaign by opponents of women's health to end access to abortion.
- Initial restrictions were designed to be too difficult to comply with, forcing women's health centers to shut down. And they worked: before the restrictions were amended in 2016, they had already forced five Virginia women's health centers to either shut their doors or stop providing abortion care.

We can all agree that however we feel about abortion, politicians shouldn't be allowed to deny access to health care.

- Women's health centers provide crucial preventative care, STD, STI and cancer screenings, birth control, mammograms, and safe and legal abortion. Thousands of Virginia women rely on these health centers for affordable access to quality care.
- Medically-unnecessary restrictions on abortion providers hurt Virginia women by further stigmatizing their reproductive health and limiting their access to quality, affordable health care.
- Allowing politicians to interfere in medical regulation sets a dangerous precedent. That's why a vast majority of Virginia's medical community opposed initial restrictions on women's health centers, and supported sound, medically-appropriate amendments during the Board's last review process.

While we are proud of the amendments adopted by the Board during the last review of these regulations, it is critical that the Board act now to implement additional commonsense and medically-based improvements.

- Supreme Court precedent has changed:
 - In their 2016 *Whole Women's Health* ruling, the Supreme Court found that targeted restrictions on abortion providers place an unconstitutional burden on women seeking abortion.
 - The Board of Health must immediately amend health center restrictions to comply with new Supreme Court precedent and the U.S. Constitution.
- We can no longer rely on the federal government to uphold abortion rights:
 - A woman who has decided to end her pregnancy deserves to be safe and supported in that decision...not criminalized, threatened, or shamed.
 - But with *Roe v. Wade* under threat, we may soon live in a world where the fundamental right to abortion is no longer protected at the federal level.
 - Given this reality, the Board must act now to ensure that Virginians can continue to access the safe, comprehensive, and compassionate health care they deserve.

Ensuring that health center regulations continue to reflect evidence-based medicine is the right step for protecting women's access to health care and rolling back the campaign of politically motivated attacks on abortion access. We are confident that the Board will once again put medicine above politics and promulgate regulations that are consistent with medical best-practice, adhere to legal guidelines, and protect abortion access in Virginia.